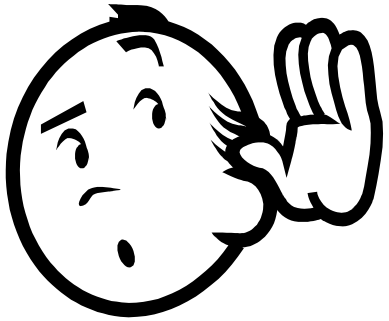
OVERVIEW OF THE HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM & ROLE OF THE HEARING CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN



Facts About Noise & Hearing

- **Most prevalent occupational health hazard in the military**
- **Non-occupational noise also causes HL**
- **NIHL is underrated - no visible signs of injury**
- **Good hearing is priceless**
- **NIHL is painless, pro ent, and preventable (4-**

Noise Induced Hearing Loss Can Result In…

- **Auditory Effects:**
  - **Gradual/progressive or immediate HF NIHL**
  - **Loss of communication ability, difficulty understanding conversations**
  - **Combination effects of noise & aging**
  - **Hearing aids help, but don’t cure**
  - **Ringing in the ears/tinnitus**

Noise Induced Hearing Loss Can Result In…

- **Non-Auditory Effects:**
  - **Affects job performance**
  - **Leads to isolation & withdrawal**
  - **Stress-related diseases**

Purpose Of the Hearing Conservation Program

- Prevent occupational NIHL
- Essential for “combat readiness”
- Help maintain fitness for duty
- To retain job/specialty
- Reduce HL Compensation Costs
- Promote healthy hearing & good quality of life

Obstacles to an Effective HCP

- **Hearing loss is underrated**
  - **It is common in industry**
  - **No visible effects of HL**
  - **A very gradual process**
- **Cultural resistance to admission of hearing loss**
  - **Associated with aging**
  - **Hearing is taken for granted until lost**

Elements of the Hearing Conservation Program

- Noise Hazard ID
- Engineering Controls
- Audiometric Monitoring
- Hearing Protective Devices
- Hearing Conservation

Technicians Responsibilities:

- Keen knowledge of regulations & Instructions
- Equipment Maintenance and troubleshooting
- Pure tone air conduction tests
- Documentation in health record
- Fit HPD’s
- Proper referrals for follow-up care
- Education/Motivation
- Counseling
- Monitor effectiveness of your program

Technician Limitations, cannot:

- **Professionally interpret audiograms**
- **Train or certify other technicians in OHC**
- **Diagnose hearing loss or ear disease**
- **Conduct testing other than Air Conduction and tympanometery**
- **Diagnose HL or ear disease**
- **Conduct noise surveys or engineering controls**

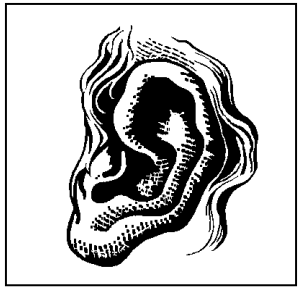
Responsibilities to the Patient

- Provide valid audiograms
- Ensure pt understanding of testing
- Promote adherence to the HCP
- Effective HPD options & fittings
- Patient Counseling
- Neat, clean test area
- Patient privacy

Coordinate With Other HCP Team Members:

- Audiologists
- Medical Officers
- Nurses
- Industrial Hygienists
- Safety Officers
- Shop Supervisors
- Noise Exposed Personnel

A Few Final Words…



- **You are, without a doubt, the most important member of the HCP support team.**
- **You see the workers first, fit their HPD's, educate & motivate them, and answer their questions.**
- **If you don't take it seriously, they won't either.**

Questions?